



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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MEMORANDUM

To: School Food Authorities (SFAs) Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

From: Falita S. Flowers, Nutrition Services Director (*Original Signed*)

Date: December 19, 2014

Subject: Offer Versus Serve Guidance for SFA's Participating in the CACFP and the SFSP

Definitions: *Food component* means one of five food groups that comprise reimbursable lunches. These are meats/meat alternates; grains; fruits; vegetables; and fluid milk. Schools must always offer all five food components in at least the minimum required quantities.

Food item means a specific food offered within the five food components. For example, a hamburger patty on a bun is one food item with two of the five food components (meat/meat alternate and grains). Separate ½ up servings of peaches, applesauce and pears are three food items that, when selected, comprise one component (fruit).

Offer versus Serve is an option available for School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the CACFP At-Risk program and sponsors operating in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Offer Versus Serve or OVS was established under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), section 9(a)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as such SFA authorities are allowed to utilize OVS if participating the CACFP At-Risk program. OVS was extended to the School Breakfast Program (SBP) in 1985 under section 4(e)(2) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. The regulations on OVS for the NSLP can be found at 7 CFR 210.10 (e) and for the SBP at 7 CFR 220.8 (e).

OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and the meal service. OVS allows students to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable lunch or breakfast. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste and to permit students to choose the foods they want to eat. Because participants may choose fewer selections under OVS, guidance is provided on what constitutes a reimbursable lunch and breakfast. OVS is optional for school food authorities (SFAs) providing meals through the at-risk after school meal component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Additionally, institutions that serve meals prepared by school food authorities that participate in NSLP and SBP - whether they are located in the school or in another location -- have the option of using OVS in their at-risk centers. OVS cannot be

used for snacks in any program.

When using OVS for the CACFP or SFSP, SFAs must follow the applicable requirements outlined in the Offer Versus Serve Guidance for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program for School Year 2014-2015. Since SFA's participating in these programs have the option to choose whether to operate their meal service under NSLP/SBP, NSLP/SBP OVS or CACFP/SFSP requirements, SFA's using this option must complete the **Offer Versus Serve Option for School Food Authorities (SFA) Form**. You may access the form on DECAL's web site at:

<http://www.decals.ga.gov/BftS/FormList.aspx?cat=CACFP>; and
<http://www.decals.ga.gov/BftS/FormList.aspx?cat=SFSP>

SFA's electing to use the OVS option must do so on or before January 31, 2015. SFA's who select the OVS option, once approved, will maintain this option for the current year and subsequent years unless the institution notifies Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) of a change in writing.

For a complete overview of NSLP and SBP OVS requirements including meal patterns and sample meal plans, please access the Offer Versus Served Guidance at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP57-2014a.pdf>.

The following provides a brief overview of OVS including the creditable and reimbursable meal requirements under OVS taken from the Offer Versus Serve Guidance. Included in the guidance is a note from DECAL on the importance of documenting the amount of declined milk.

Offering Choices within Components is Not OVS

Offering choices within components does not necessarily constitute OVS. Schools are encouraged to give students options for entrees and side items and are required to offer a variety of milk. If students are required to select every component, the SFA is not using OVS. Under OVS, students must be allowed to decline components (except for the required serving of a fruit or a vegetable).

The options OVS for both Breakfast and Lunch are highlighted below:

Use of OVS in the SBP

OVS is optional at all grade levels.

The meal pattern for breakfast consists of three food components:

- (1) Fruits (or vegetables substitution)
- (2) Grains (or optional credited meats/meat alternates)
- (3) Milk

The age/grade groups for breakfasts are:

- K-5
- 6-8 and
- 9-12.

For OVS:

- At least four food items must be offered;
- All students, at any grade level, must select at least three food items;
- For grains (or meat/meat alternate offered for this component) and milk, the student must select the daily minimum required amount; and
- For the fruit component, the student must select at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetables.

Please Note: Smoothies with fruit and milk are another popular combination food offered at breakfast. If there is at least 1 cup of milk and at least ½ cup of fruit/juice in the smoothie, the smoothie may count as 2 food items for purposes of OVS. A student would need to select one additional food item in order to have 3 total items and a reimbursable meal. For more information on smoothies, refer to Bright from the Start's policy memo, "*Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs*," dated December 2, 2013 November 14, 2013, which can be found at:

http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/SmoothiesOfferedCNP_120213.pdf.

Use of OVS in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

- OVS must be available for students at senior high schools (as defined by the State educational agency)
- OVS is optional at middle and elementary schools (as defined by the State educational agency)
- OVS is not allowed for the NSLP snack service
- OVS is optional for summer meals offered by school food authorities (SFAs) through the Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP

The meal pattern for lunches consists of five food components:

- (1) Fruits
- (2) Vegetables
- (3) Grains
- (4) Meats/meat alternates
- (5) Fluid milk

The age/grade groups for lunches are:

- K-5
- 6-8
- 9-12

Under OVS, all students, at any grade level, must select:

- At least 3 of 5 food components **AND**

One of the choices selected must be at least a ½ cup serving of the fruit or vegetable component or ½ cup total serving of both fruit and vegetable.

Please Note: If ½ cup of fruit is selected, the student must select the full required daily serving of the vegetable component to be counted as meeting that component (e.g., for 9-12 graders, two ½ cups of a fruit and a vegetable cannot be credited as two components if the student only selects three components total. One or the other must be a full cup to count both as components. Alternately, the student could select a grain or meat/meat alternate as the third component instead of more fruits or vegetables). In

general, if a student does not select at least ½ cup serving total of fruits and vegetables, the lunch is not creditable or reimbursable, even if he/she has three other components (meat/meat alternate, grains, milk).

When Participants Decline Milk

As part of DECAL's compliance review process, institutions are evaluated to determine if proper quantities of milk were served for meal service for a particular review month. In the case of OVS, institutions must also document on a daily basis, the amount of milk declined per student, per meal service (breakfast and lunch). This documentation must be available at the time of the review so that the reviewer may compare any declined milk to actual milk purchases when determining if sufficient milk was offered to participants.

For questions concerning this memorandum, please contact Sonja Adams, Policy Administrator at (404) 651-8193.